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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000070

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SUBJECT: DCM URGES GUINEA'S PRIME MINISTER TO MOVE TOWARD
ELECTIONS

REF: CONAKRY 55

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Kent C. Brokenshire

¶1. (C) Summary: Prime Minister Komara asked for US assistance in anti narcotics activities and judicial sector reform. During a January 23 meeting, which included the Minister of Justice and two other military officers, the PM said the president of the CNDD was determined to pursue anyone involved in drug trafficking, and would welcome US information and technical assistance. The PM said the recent invasion of several private companies by units of the Presidential Guard looking for cash demonstrated an 'excess of zeal' on the part of the soldiers. The DCM told the PM that the surest way for Guinea to secure funding was to hold timely elections. DCM noted that the international community was considering following the US lead and suspending assistance, and that the moment is at hand for Guinea to break a half century of autocratic rule and enter a new era. The PM said the GoG would shortly announce an election timetable. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Prime Minister Kabine Komara appeared relaxed and in good humor when he met with DCM at the Primature on January 23. Included in the meeting were newly-named Minister of Justice Lt. Col Siba Nolamou, the new anti-narcotics chief Captain Camara, and chief of security for the prime minister's office Col. Toure. The PM said narcotics activity had dropped off considerably in Guinea since the coup. He noted that Guinean police had recently collared six Chinese engaged in producing pharmaceuticals using flour as a substitute for medicine and selling it locally under a French label.

¶3. (C) Turning to cocaine, the PM said Guinean police need surveillance and communications equipment to monitor the activities of traffickers, and would welcome any information the US could provide on who in the government might be involved. He also asked the US to provide the GoG with one or two anti-narcotics agents willing to work closely with Guinean police. "The President wants to show everyone how serious he is about fighting trafficking," said Capt. Camara.

¶4. (C) The Prime Minister apologized for a rash of invasions of private businesses by soldiers of the presidential guard looking for money to allegedly shore up the government's weak finances. Armed soldiers reportedly visited a number of cellular telephone companies and hauled employees to a military base where they were kept until undisclosed sums of money were paid. The PM explained that these actions were not lawful and were the result of an 'excess of zeal' among the troops. He promised to issue a communique threatening disciplinary action on any soldier who engaged in such activities.

¶5. (C) The PM said the justice sector required immediate foreign assistance. The ministry currently did not have

enough funding to transport prisoners from the prison to the courthouse to stand trial. He also hoped the US would support efforts to separate the functions of the ministry from the courts so that judges may exercise more autonomy. Lastly, the PM appealed for public works assistance for the military so that soldiers and civilians could reconcile their differences by working together to construct roads, public buildings and canals.

¶6. (C) DCM reminded the PM and the others present that the US had suspended all but humanitarian and democracy assistance to Guinea, and was unlikely to lift the suspension until elections were a reality. The PM then wondered if the Embassy would be open to the idea of classifying assistance to the military as humanitarian aid since it would be used to improve military-civilian ties. DCM did not encourage speculation along those lines, and reminded the PM and others that the surest way for Guinea to secure US assistance was to set a timely date for National Assembly elections and adhere to it.

¶7. (C) DCM closed by stating that honest dialogue was an integral part of US-Guinean relations. He noted that a groundswell of international sentiment was developing and calling for Guinea to move as quickly as possible to civilian democratic rule. DCM added that other nations and financial institutions were considering following the US lead in cutting off assistance unless elections were announced soon, a move that would have disastrous economic consequences for the country. On the other hand, he reminded the Prime Minister that the moment was at hand for the leadership of the country to make a break with the autocratic past and set

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the country on a course toward a new era. The PM thanked DCM for his candor. He said the GoG was developing an election timetable that would shortly be announced, and asked that the US work closely with his government during the transition.

¶8. (C) Comment: The PM was more upbeat than in our previous meetings (reftel). He appeared relaxed and in good humor, and insisted on using the familiar and friendly "tu" form of speech in his discussions with DCM. In a previous meeting he told DCM that his 17-year-old daughter was a US citizen, and his 29-year-old daughter was an LPR working in New York. Though the extent of his ability to influence events in Guinea remains in doubt, he appears predisposed to carry on a frank dialogue with the USG. We will continue to advocate for elections and democratic rule with the GoG at every opportunity.

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